

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 COME-00 OC-05 CCO-00 /019 W

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R 031548Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4927

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 7566

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BGEN, BFOL, IV

SUBJECT: DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN FOREIGN POST AND COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT DISTRICT OFFICES

REF: STATE 202051

1. THIS EMBASSY'S EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT FLEXIBILITY
AFFORDED BY AUTHORIZATION TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH
COMMERCE DISTRICT OFFICES IN URGENT SITUATIONS WOULD BE
MOST HELPFUL. WE UNDERSTAND, OF COURSE, THAT BOUNDARIES
WOULD HAVE TO BE DEFINED REGARDING REQUESTS SO AS NOT TO
OVERBURDEN EITHER DISTRICT OFFICES OR FOREIGN SERVICE
POSTS.

2. EMBASSY'S EXPERIENCE LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT
BUSINESSES WOULD BE HIGHLY APPRECIATIVE OF RAPID
SERVICING OF AGENT-DISTRIBUTOR SERVICE REQUESTS
DIRECTLY BY COMMERCE DISTRICT OFFICES. BUSINESSMEN
FREQUENTLY CALL AT EMBASSY UNANNOUNCED, AND EMBASSY
DOES NOT HAVE ADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE OF A FIRM'S FINANCIAL STATUS
AND BACKING OR ITS SUSTAINED INTEREST IN AND CAPACITY TO CONDUCT
BUSINESS IN WEST AFRICA. DIRECT COMMUNICATION WITH COMMERCE
DISTRICT OFFICE WOULD BE USEFUL IN ACQUIRING NEEDED BACKGROUND
INFORMATION ON TIMELY BASIS. THESE ARE BUT TWO EXAMPLES OF
WHERE DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS WOULD ENABLE COMMERCE
DEPARTMENT AND FOREIGN POSTS TO BETTER SERVE US BUSINESS
INTERESTS. THERE ARE DOUBTLESS OTHER URGENT REQUESTS BY
AMERICAN FIRMS WHICH COULD BE HANDLED DIRECTLY.

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3. AS USDOC KNOWS, EMBASSY ALREADY RECEIVES

MANY DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS FROM US FIRMS INFORMING US
THEIR SALES REPS OR INVESTMENT TEAM WILL BE VISITING
IVORY COAST, AND THE FIRMS VERY OFTEN REQUEST COMMERCIAL
INFORMATION. THIS EMBASSY, WITHIN THE GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED
BY COMMERCE, RESPONDS DIRECTLY TO US FIRMS BY LETTER. IN
DEALING WITH INVESTORS, PRIMARILY, AND TO A MUCH LESSER DEGREE,
EXPORTERS, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT, IN CERTAIN CASES, IT
WOULD BE HELPFUL IF EMBASSY HAD FLEXIBILITY TO TELEX FIRMS
DIRECTLY. DURING VARIOUS STAGES OF NEGOTIATING AN INVESTMENT
OR IN COMPLETING AN INVESTMENT PROJECT, PROBLEMS SOMETIMES
ARISE (WHEN THE US FIRM DOES NOT HAVE AT THAT MOMENT ITS
OWN REPRESENTATIVE IN IVORY COAST LOOKING AFTER FIRM'S
INTEREST). EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT AUTHORITY TO INFORM US
FIRM DIRECTLY AND RAPIDLY OF DEVELOPING PROBLEM MAY PERMIT
FIRM TO RESOLVE ISSUE BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND. POSTS
WOULD, OF COURSE, HAVE TO KEEP COMMERCE DEPARTMENT
FULLY INFORMED OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS. COOKE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ABIDJA07566
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750305-0857
From: ABIDJAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750986/aaaacxyn.tel
Line Count: 78
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 202051
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAR 2003 by maustmc>; APPROVED <13 JAN 2004 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN FOREIGN POST AND COMMERCE DEPARTMENT DISTRICT OFFICES
TAGS: BGEN, BFOL, IV
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006